

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice No. 2929]

Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Private International Law (ACPIL) Study Group on Electronic Commerce Meeting Notice and Request for Public Comments

The Department of State's Advisory Committee Study Group on Electronic Commerce will hold a meeting Friday, June 19 in Washington, D.C. from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The meeting will review international and national developments concerning computer-based authentication, signature and message integrity systems, and consider possible approaches to international rules and related domestic concerns.

The discussion will include developments at the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL); the OECD; proposed new uniform state laws in the U.S., including Uniform Commercial Code Article 2B and the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act; and other state and federal laws and regulations proposed or adopted. The Advisory Committee will also consider developments at the European Commission, the Science and Technology, Business, and International Law Sections of the American Bar Association, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, the American Law Institute, and other organizations as appropriate.

In particular, two documents will be reviewed which will then be considered by UNCITRAL at the next meeting of its Working Group on Electronic Commerce in July 1998. These include (1) the recently revised "Draft Uniform Rules on Electronic Signatures" issued by the Secretariat, and (2) a proposal by the United States on a "Draft International Convention on Electronic Transactions" (U.N. Docs.A/CN.9/WG.IV/WP.76 and 77, dated 25 May, 1998).

Issues that may be reviewed by the Advisory Committee may include, but are not limited to, prior U.S. views urging international bodies to examine the various electronic authentication systems now available or emerging, to allow both technological and market developments to form the basis of any rules, in order to avoid unnecessary impediments to electronic commerce. Included will be a consideration of rules which can encompass both unregulated private sector systems, as well as governmentally regulated or licensed systems; whether rules for authentication or signature systems should distinguish between commercial and consumer transactions; possible rules on risk allocation, attribution and

reliance; whether third party assurance providers, such as certifying authorities, should have to meet minimum levels of assurance; what role information security standards should play in this process; whether rules are needed on incorporation by reference; what types of rules for cross-certification between different countries are feasible; and other related issues. Jurisdictional issues will also be discussed as appropriate.

Participants may also wish to review the recently completed UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce, which covers the legal effect and validity of computer messages in commercial transactions; functional equivalents of signatures, writings, etc.; attribution of messages; time and place where communications are deemed to have taken place; electronic bills of lading; and other matters.

The meeting is open to the public up to the capacity of the meeting room, and members of the public may participate subject to rulings of the Chair. The meeting will be held in Washington at the International Law Institute (ILI), at 1615 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. Participants should register in advance since space may be limited. Please advise either the Office of Legal Adviser (L/PIL) at the State Department by calling Rosie Gonzales at (202) 776-8420, by fax at 776-8482, or by email to: pildb@his.com., or call Stuart Kerr, ILI Executive Director, at (202) 483-3036, or by fax at 483-3029.

Participants will receive the above-referenced documents by providing Ms. Gonzales with their email address, or alternatively by requesting paper copies. The office mailing address is: Office of the Legal Adviser (L/PIL), Suite 355, South Building, 2430 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20037-2800. Members of the public who cannot attend are welcome to request the documents and to comment on this topic.

Harold S. Burman,

Executive Director, Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Private International Law.

[FR Doc. 98-14855 Filed 6-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-08-M

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 2831]

Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs; Certifications Pursuant to Section 609 of Pub. L. 101-162

May 19, 1998.

SUMMARY: On May 1, 1998, the Department of State certified, pursuant

to Section 609 of Pub. L. 101-162 ("Section 609"), that 16 nations have adopted programs to reduce the incidental capture of sea turtles in their shrimp fisheries comparable to the program in effect in the United States. The Department also certified that the fishing environments in 23 other countries do not pose a threat of the incidental taking of sea turtles protected under Section 609. Shrimp imports from any nation not certified were prohibited effective May 1, 1998 pursuant to Section 609.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 4, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hollis Summers, Office of Marine Conservation, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-7818; telephone: (202) 647-2337.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 609 of Pub. L. 101-162 prohibits imports of certain categories of shrimp unless the President certifies to the Congress not later than May 1 of each year either: (1) That the harvesting nation has adopted a program governing the incidental capture of sea turtles in its commercial shrimp fishery comparable to the program in effect in the United States and has an incidental take rate comparable to that of the United States; or (2) that the fishing environment in the harvesting nation does not pose a threat of the incidental taking of sea turtles. The President has delegated the authority to make this certification to the Department of State. Revised State Department guidelines for making the required certifications were published in the **Federal Register** on April 19, 1996 (61 FR 17342).

On May 1, 1998, the Department certified 16 nations on this basis: Belize, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, Thailand, and Trinidad and Tobago. Brazil and Nigeria, certified on these grounds in 1997, did not retain their certifications. Brazil and Venezuela failed to demonstrate their regulations requiring the use of sea turtle excluder devices (TEDs) were being adequately enforced; Nigeria did not respond to requests that a U.S. team be allowed to visit its shrimp fleet.

The Department also certified 23 shrimp harvesting nations as having fishing environments that do not pose a danger to sea turtles. Sixteen nations have shrimping grounds only in cold waters where the risk of taking sea turtles is negligible. They are: Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Chile,